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ABSTRACT

Feminist scholarship has the potential of modifying the assumptions, values, and methodologies of any discipline because it examines that field from the viewpoint of both men and women. Faculty development programs across the country are aimed at incorporating this new scholarship into the curriculum. One such program, the University of Maryland's "Thinking about Women," is used as the model for this paper. Curricular transformation projects share the goal of teaching about women and diversity with sensitivity in the classroom. Statistics show that women comprise 51 percent of the public relations field. This feminization of the field is cause for concern to both males and females, for history shows that shifting from a male to a female majority brings with it a depressed salary schedule and loss of prestige. Since men remain in positions of power in public relations, public relations educators should feel compelled to sensitize them to their responsibilities to the entire field--males, females, and minorities. This paper argues for curriculum review and revision of courses in public relations to reflect the new scholarship on women both in the field itself and in related disciplines. The effects of such a transformation should extend well beyond the classroom. While helping to create an inclusive community of scholars in public relations at the time, it should also establish a future generation of managers who will reject any asymmetrical model of practice that does not value the diversity, the cooperation, the equity, the ethics, and the responsibility that have characterized their education. A 33-item bibliography is included. (JB)

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APPLICATIONS OF FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP TO PUBLIC RELATIONS: DISPLACING THE MALE MODELS

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Tension in the Field: Feminization of Public Relations Versus the Male Models that Characterize It

Almost two-thirds of all students in the typical journalism or mass communication classroom of the 1980s are women (Dow Jones Newspaper Fund, 1989). Certain emphases under the umbrella of journalism, however, attract even a higher proportion of women. Public relations, in particular, enrolls about 68 percent female undergraduates--the highest proportion of women among the specializations that include advertising, news-editorial and broadcast journalism (Peterson, 1988).

Along with the feminization of the field of public relations in the United States has come increasing interest in whatever differences might exist in the way men and women do their job. We know that many of our female students will go on to fill the technician's role, rather than the managerial role, throughout their careers. Some women self-select that technical role, considering it a "safe haven." Too many others find it imposed upon them.

We can argue about whether society--the socialization process beginning in infancy and reinforced throughout the school years--or the overwhelmingly white male power elite in the workplace erected the "glass ceiling" that obstructs the typical woman's advancement into management in public relations. What I hope we can agree on is the potential value of women's aspiring to and achieving the managerial rank. This seems not only equitable for individuals, the women themselves, but important for the organization that can capitalize on their human resources and for the publics served by their organizations. A growing body of feminist literature in public relations, journalism and mass communication suggests that

women would practice a more cooperative, negotiation style of public relations than would men if women saw themselves in a managerial--rather than technical--role.[1]

The mediating, cooperative approach to public relations characterizes what J. Grunig (1984) has called the "two-way symmetrical" model. An equally two-way but persuasive, dominating model is the "asymmetrical." One-way concepts of public relations include the press agentry/publicity and public information models.

These four normative models, as J. Grunig conceived them, represent a linear, historical progression that began with practitioners such as P.T. Barnum, press agent *par excellence*. J. Grunig considers the two-way symmetrical approach the most contemporary. Although relatively rare, it is reflected in the work of professional communicators in regulated businesses and in scholars publishing in academic journals.

One possible explanation for the lack of empirical support for the efficacy of these models as predictors of actual public relations practice (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1989) is the nature of the progression. Rather than being linear, the nature might be curvilinear. If--as historical evidence is beginning to suggest[2]--nineteenth-century practitioners of public relations included women who practiced a model that more closely paralleled the two-way symmetrical than press agentry, then P.T. Barnum and his cohorts may represent the nadir of the field. With the reemergence of female practitioners during the late twentieth century, public relations may be rising once again to the heights of responsibility that might have characterized its pioneer days. Implications for today's practice include a heightened

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[1] For a synopsis of this literature, see Wetherell (1989).

[2] One woman who was a native of Somerset county, Maryland, deserves special mention because of the impact of her work as a public relations counselor to President Abraham Lincoln (L. Grunig, in progress).

sensitivity to an organization's stakeholders and a mutually adaptive, participatory approach to communication.

Moving the practice of public relations from the dominant, asymmetrical model to the preferred but all-too-rare symmetrical model must begin with education. Both the content of the courses and the climate of the classroom should foster students' understanding of what exists, what is possible and what is ideal--both in terms of effectiveness and ethics.

Unfortunately, sensitive educators who have attempted to raise the consciousness of their students to the problems women may encounter at work find the going rough. Undergraduates typically reject the notion that the public relations department (and even the classroom) is not a meritocracy. My own teaching evaluations from the semester in which the University adopted a policy embracing inclusive language reflect this rejection. In the wake of considerable discussion of the effects of the differential communication patterns of men and women (both on campus and on the job), students' critiques were either apathetic to the problem or hostile.

Only five of the forty undergraduates in a public relations theory courses alluded to the lectures dealing with women's issues at all. Those who did comment were, to a person, critical. One said, "I would like less emphasis on the manager aspect--it makes it seem like being a technician is something to be looked down upon." A second seemed to agree, saying: "I got the feeling too much emphasis was placed on professionalism and the desire to make it to the top. Not <u>everyone</u> wants that. Also, the gender issue received too much emphasis."

Perhaps predictably, the male students were disproportionately alienated by mention of women's issues, especially the language question. One considered the discussion of sexist

language "man-bashing." He said that such discussion "alienates the few males here. We're not responsible for the way things are, so we shouldn't feel the resentment for it or endure the consequences." Another male student echoed this sentiment: "Dwelling on this complicated problem doesn't help. Please speak more highly of men." A third man in the class perceived "almost reverse discrimination against men when covering 'sex' in the field of PR." Two of these students alluded to their female classmates feeling the same way.

Several explanations suggest themselves for this antagonistic or apathetic reaction. One may be the "myth of liberation," or students' feelings that their mothers' generation solved the women's problem twenty years ago. Another is the generational gap immature students perceive. They may equate teachers with parents and thus reject the values of those authority figures in an attempt to differentiate themselves from parental values. On the other hand, if they believe they may encounter discrimination in their chosen field, they might consider this information too threatening to accept. Finally, they unconsciously may have internalized sexist attitudes, values and aspirations--buying into what the patriarchy wants (consciously or unconsciously) them to be or to do. As Moi (1985, p. 29) explained:

> If. . .we accept with Freud that all human beings--even women--may internalize the standards of their oppressors, and that they may distressingly identify with their own persecutors, liberation can no longer be seen solely as the logical consequence of rational exposure of the false beliefs on which patriarchal rule is based.

Thus the anecdotal evidence in the teaching evaluations and the Freudian explanation, in particular, seem to suggest that it is not enough to do as Rich (1979, p. 244) urged--that we **discuss** with our students the context in which women "think, write, read, study, project their own futures." Instead, we need a more concerted and comprehensive effort to help students understand how ideology affects learning and how cultural diversity can enrich their educational experience and--by extension--their chances for professional success.

Diversity in the Curriculum

All public relations students--majority as well as minority, male as well as female--stand to gain from a host of faculty development programs across the country that are aimed at incorporating the new scholarship on women into the curriculum. One such program, used as the model for this paper, is the University of Maryland, College Park's summer seminar, "Thinking About Women."[3] This three-year program, funded by the campus president and directed by his special assistant, Betty Schmitz, began in 1989.[4]

Similar initiatives go by different names and enjoy different sources of funding. They may be as elaborate as the state of New Jersey model or as simple as a .

What these curricular transformation projects share, though, is the goal of teaching about women and diversity with sensitivity in the classroom. The goal is not to indoctrinate participants in radical feminism nor to create a tension between "outsiders" and "believers." It is certainly not to teach female undergraduates to "think like men."[5] Rather, these projects are grounded in two core assumptions:

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[3] The program has enjoyed a long list of names in its short history. It began with the formal title "Incorporating the New Scholarship on Women into the Curriculum." It was known informally as both the course revision institute and versions of the transformation-of-the-curriculum project. It also has been called the implementation of the Greer Report, which spawned it on this campus. The decision to leave "transformation" out of the formal title was deliberate, because of the hostile reactions to the term encountered during the year of the program's inception.

[4] As a participant in the program, this author acknowledges the disadvantage of subjectivity inherent in writing about it but at the same time claims the advantage of immersion and resulting expertise that insiders gain. My participation also explains the extensive use of personal pronouns--"I," "my," "me," "we" and "our"--in this paper.

[5] As Rich (1979, p. 244) said, "Men in general think badly: in disjuncture from their personal lives, claiming objectivity where the most irrational passions seethe, losing, as Virginia Woolf observed, their senses in the pursuit of professionalism."

* Perspectives gleaned from two decades of scholarship in women's studies have profound implications for the teaching of the entire liberal arts curriculum.

* All students could benefit from its study, by gaining a truer and more complete understanding of the human experience.

Feminist scholarship has the potential of modifying the assumptions, values and methodologies of any discipline because it examines that field from the viewpoint of both men and women. As Schmitz (1988, p. 2) explained in her project proposal:

> In addition to making available new information on women's lives and experiences, recovering lost texts, reinterpreting existing works, studying new populations, the new scholarship on women questions some of the assumptions, theories, and organizing principles of the disciplines. For example, scholars of American literature have reexamined assumptions underlying choices of texts for standard courses and adopted new critical approaches to incorporate recently recovered and contemporary writings by white women and by women and men of Asian American, Black American, Hispanic and Native American cultures.

Of course, the notion of transforming the curriculum in any field is not universally embraced by educators. Women themselves may not relish the prospect of tackling this exhausting enterprise--especially since it carries precious few guarantees of success. Coyner (cited in Boxer, 1982, p. 258), for example, advised feminists to "abandon the energy-draining and still overwhelmingly unsuccessful effort to transform the established disciplines." She recommended, instead, the development of a new community of scholars whose intent would be discovering new paradigms and founding a new normative science.

Langland and Gove (1983) documented the resistance to transformation, which they attribute largely to its challenge of deeply held, almost sacred beliefs.

The Need for Inclusivity in Public Relations Education

Why is all of this so important? In arguing against the funding of transformation projects, one may claim that women and men already receive an equal education. As Rich

(1979, p. 241) pointed out, though:

> If there is any misleading concept, it is that of "coeducation": that because women and men are sitting in the same classrooms, hearing the same lectures, reading the same books, performing the same laboratory experiments, they are receiving an equal education. They are not first because the content of education itself validates men even as it invalidates women.

With the feminization of both the classroom and the practice of public relations (U.S. Dept. of Labor statistics show women comprising 51% of the field right now), male as well as female students worry about their future in public relations. Three out of four entry-level jobs in public relations were taken by female graduates last year alone (Dow Jones Newspaper Fund, 1989). History teaches that shifting from a male to a female majority brings with it a depressed salary schedule and loss of prestige (witness elementary education, library science and nursing). Some fields--including public relations--suffer additional disadvantages: sublimation of the function to related areas (in our case, advertising or marketing) and encroachment by outsiders to manage the program (again, in our case, MBAs and attorneys).

These problems affect men as well as women. Further, since men remain in positions of power in public relations, public relations educators should feel compelled to sensitize them to their responsibilities to the entire field--female as well as male practitioners.

Finally, minority students (female and male) considering a career in public relations would benefit from the elimination of the ahistorical and imperialistic generalizations that have characterized too much of the body of knowledge in public relations to date. As a new academic discipline, public relations has relied on the theorizing of a relatively small cadre of white, middle-class men. Scholarship in the field has not accommodated the dramatic demographic shift of student body from male to female majority.

This paper will argue for curriculum review and revision of courses in public relations to reflect the new scholarship on women both in the field itself and in related disciplines. The argument is not predicated on the need to do original research, although data on the history of women and minorities in public relations are virtually nonexistent. (Textbooks create the impression that white males were the only pioneer practitioners. Anecdotal evidence and the literature of history, however, suggest that several women were prominent practitioners from the Civil War through the first few decades of this century.[6] Their contributions to the field of public relations should be documented and communicated to students.)

Even without these much-needed additions to the historical record of the field, theorizing from the related areas of mass and organizational communication, cognitive psychology, business management, organizational sociology and cultural anthropology as well as from the handful of feminist and minority studies in public relations *per se* would enrich the education that all students in public relations stand to receive. For one example from those related fields, role theory should help answer the question of why women find themselves relegated to the technician--rather than the managerial--role in public relations (the "glass ceiling" problem). One case of important new research in the field by or about women and minorities is the work of Marilyn Kern-Foxworth on what she calls the "acrylic vault," or the box that traps African-American practitioners.

Despite these and other new areas of inquiry in our discipline and despite the number of female undergraduates enrolled across the country, few universities offer courses specifically for women in public relations. Reconceptualizing a current course offering,

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[6] See, for example, Henry's (1988) biography of Doris Fleischman Bernays.

especially a required course, would provide undergraduates with a more balanced perspective than most catalog offerings to date have reflected. The introductory theory or principles class, required of students who choose to emphasize the public relations sequence, typically attracts large numbers of undergraduates. There students become acquainted with the history and culture of the field. This represents the stage at which students are most receptive to notions of social responsibility, ethics and the context in which the feminization of our field has occurred.

Thus this first course offers the most promise for transformation. As such, it will be the focus for this paper. (Keep in mind, though, that the question facing feminist educators most often is which course to "repair" first since most introductory texts--not just in public relations--are insensitive to women and minorities.)

Including the experiences of women and minorities--both historical figures and contemporary practitioners--should support and encourage female and minority students while suggesting new roles for white male students. Doing so would make good on an assumption inherent in most courses: creating a classroom climate that values inclusivity as a path to excellence.

Of course, any effective transformation of the **curriculum** in public relations would require more extensive change. All syllabi and textbooks should be reviewed for the inclusion of information on gender roles, representations of women in readings, inclusive language, women in the history of public relations and so forth. Then any gaps in the syllabi and in the literature should be addressed.

Here we might rely on the feminist critique of traditional foreign language teaching materials. These texts are designed to introduce students not only to the grammar and

vocabulary of the language but to the foreign country's culture, history, literature and so forth. Similarly, public relations texts should go beyond the technical content to acquaint readers with the language of the workplace, the culture of the field, its history and more.

Wright (1984) delineated three areas of concern to feminists in foreign language instruction. According to Wright, initially feminists focused on the images of women in foreign language textbooks. They found instances of sexism and bias in the negative treatment of women there. Next, they looked at women's place in the target culture. Most recently, they are reevaluating the most basic assumptions about the language itself.[7]

Because these concerns represent an historical progress in feminist scholarship across the disciplines, we could anticipate moving through similar stages in any transformation of the texts we use in public relations. More specifically, we might begin by studying the four basic problems Wright (1984) identified with how women are represented. First, she found that women tended to be excluded--either absent altogether or underrepresented. She also found stereotyping or distortion. In our field, this might be typified by showing females employed in not-for-profit organizations and males in corporations. Instead, Wright argued that textbooks should show women in nontraditional roles without "overpopulating the text to the point of implausibility." She was careful to point out that stereotypes do contain enough truth to seem compelling, yet they tend to make what is merely common into oppressive generalizations. She also alluded to the typical problems of subordination (female technicians, male managers) and degradation (women are not serious about their careers; they don't aspire to management). In short, too many second-language texts (and, in my

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[7] Wright (1984, pp. 2-3) hastened to explain that feminists' attention has shifted not because the problems initially identified have been solved but because "we are a nimble-minded lot and because women's studies perspectives are so stunningly productive.. . ."

view, public relations texts as well) offer what Wright (1984, p. 5) considered "a remarkably impoverished slice of life." They are destined to bore, at the very least, our increasingly diverse study body.

Cursory review of existing syllabi banks and of the popular texts in public relations suggests that the following might be indicated. Incorporate multiple perspectives to teach about the lives and views of different genders, races, classes, ages and physical conditions of practitioners in the field. For writing or techniques courses, develop units of study on using non-sexist language in news releases, cutlines, speeches, PSAs, newsletter copy and so forth. Include consideration of inclusive art: depiction of women and minorities in a variety of roles and settings in photographs and in symbolic representations such as line drawings and even clip art.

For principles or theory courses, conduct research on the history of women and minorities in public relations. Even without this new evidence, though, a transformation of the introductory public relations course can be accomplished. The next two sections of this paper tell how.

The Maryland Transformation Project

Transformation rarely happens in a vacuum. At the University of Maryland, implementation of the transformation project was one of a number of initiatives aimed at improving the status of undergraduate women's education. Placing it in the context of the new policy on inclusive language, institution of a day-care center, enhancement of the women's studies program and the on-going efforts of the President's Commission on Women's Affairs is useful in recognizing curricular transformation as only one--albeit a powerful--way to encourage women students and faculty.

Transforming any course hinges on three major dimensions: reading, thinking and discussing. Scholars accepted for Maryland's interdisciplinary summer program engaged in two months of salaried, full-time study and colloquia. According to Schmitz (1988), its coordinator, it is similar to about 200 other projects across the country. The impetus for its development at College Park, though, was a recommendation of a major committee report in 1987 that called for faculty to "take into account the emerging scholarly literature by and about women and minorities.. ." (Pease, 1987). That report led, in turn, to the (1988) report of the university's Committee on Undergraduate Women's Education, known as the Greer Committee for its chair. The Greer report called for a transformation of both the curriculum and of the campus climate in light of what it considered two compelling conditions: demographics of the changing student body (increasingly female and ethnically diverse) and the nature of the new scholarship on women.

The fifteen successful applicants to the resulting program (eight men and seven women) began by developing individual reading lists from within their own fields, looking for texts that relate to the experience of women. They shared a jointly conceived, broad-based reading list as well, digesting representative articles from a variety of disciplines on the dimensions of race, class and ethnicity in female experience. Groups of articles looked at a single topic from different theoretical perspectives and with examples from different disciplines. According to Schmitz (1989, p. 2), selection of the texts was based on her experience with similar seminars, models from comparable institutions, suggestions from her colleagues on campus and off, and participants' comments. These readings were well known, often cited and--in many cases--useful as critiques of the best-known theories. By meeting twice a week for eight weeks, participants had the time necessary to reflect on these

readings before discussing them within the group.

The seminar syllabus included competing theories within feminism, some radical and some more conservative. It incorporated pedagogical exercises as well, wherein participants could experiment with approaches to teaching suggested by the readings and class discussion. Nationally known scholars in women's studies and other fields joined the seminar on occasion. In the final weeks of the program, participants presented results of their own work.

The seminar evolved throughout the summer, however. Its flexibility allowed for investigation in more detail of questions of special interest to participants. Only the first three weeks were planned in advance of the introductory meeting.

The seminar began with an overview of the development of feminist thought, including participants' own development (as conveyed through their "intellectual autobiographies delivered orally during the initial week). The first week emphasized teaching women, both black studies and women's studies. One group of readings dealt with language, reading and gender. Another focused on bias and stereotyping.

The second week explored feminism and the academy--specifically, rethinking the disciplines and transforming the curriculum in the light of two decades of feminist scholarship. The concept of "canon" permeated these readings. The third week dealt with implications of this body of history and literature for teaching and research. Topics included diversity (commonalities and differences) and the intersection of race, class, ethnicity and gender. Subsequent units of study, suggested by participants, included the academy as an institution, women's history (with special emphasis on the Sears case), sexuality and pornography, biological determinism (nature versus nurture), social constructionist theory,

psychoanalytic theory, the sociology of knowledge, portrayal of women in the media, cross-cultural perspectives, women in science, the rhetoric of feminist scholarship, creativity, the family and the workplace.

Transforming the Introductory Public Relations Course

Out of the interdisciplinary summer program described above grew the following approach to teaching the introductory course required of public relations majors. At the University of Maryland, that course is theory. However, the scheme of progressing from the broad issue of gender consciousness and language through a discussion of the structures that may impede women's empowerment to the narrower focus on women in leadership roles should apply to some degree in any public relations course. Certainly the emergent philosophy of public relations is an overarching concept that embraces all coursework in the field.

Consider each of these three areas and the philosophical framework not as discrete units of study but as themes to be woven throughout the course at the appropriate times. Suggested readings should inform class lectures or discussions; most are not intended as required reading for students. Instead, these articles should help educators understand the critical problems in public relations by understanding the nature of the tools we have borrowed from other disciplines.

1. Philosophy

Any feminist transformation of an introductory course on public relations theory requires a reconceptualization of the philosophy of the field. Philosophy seems the most appropriate place to start, given the field's roots in rhetoric with its ethical emphasis. And, no discourse on philosophy would be complete without a sensitivity to any aspects of

oppression that may characterize the field.

Thus the emergent philosophy will examine the status of women and minorities who are affected by the oppressive structures detailed, for example, in the Fall 1988 issue of the Public Relations Review. There, students, educators, theorists and practitioners--male and female, majority and minority alike--critiqued the monolithic white male perspective that has characterized the public relations classroom, department and firm to date. What this philosophy should contribute to the feminist critique of public relations is a determination of the role of female and minority practitioners, students and researchers. Are women and minorities typically active agents or objects of oppression?

Activist Angela Davis also happens to be a professional philosopher. Her (1972) historical research portrayed female black slaves as rebels who managed to undermine significantly the authority of their oppressive masters. The implications of her work are that women and minorities in roles seemingly inarguably victimized actively can resist repression and subjugation. Historical research in the field of public relations might expose similar, albeit less dramatic, instances of female activity eclipsing objectification.

Indeed, feminist historians of various fields are replacing any single-sex view of development of their disciplines with the understanding that women not only have been present but have been active at each stage of the past (DuBois *et al.*, 1985, p. 50). Including the story of women's contributions to the development of public relations undoubtedly would change the historical view of the field significantly. Thus this philosophy of public relations would be enhanced by more investigations along the lines of Henry's (1988) biography of Doris Fleischman, wife of Edward L. Bernays and credible practitioner in her own right.

"Contribution theory," though, has its limitations. Feminists have argued that fitting women into existing histories may devalue the role of women and minority practitioners less notable than, say, a Doris Fleischman. Lerner (1975), for example, urged historians and philosophers to develop new conceptual frameworks that may depart from the traditional categories and value systems of the male-derived experience. Transforming the introductory course should do just that.

However, determining the role of female and minority practitioners--agent or object?--is not so easy. Perhaps the much-needed research in the history of the field will answer the question in much the same way that Cott's work on women in 18th- and 19th-century New England did. Cott (1977) concluded that women were not solely victims nor active agents but some of both. Additional references useful in developing a feminist philosophy of public relations include Vetterling-Braggin, Elliston and English, 1978; Gould, 1983; Gould and Wartofsky, 1976; and Jones and Jonasdottir, 1988.

2. Gender consciousness

Begin by reading Gurin's (1985) "Women's Gender Consciousness." Lerner (1979(, as well, promulgates the argument that feminism begins with self-consciousness, or the awareness of women's special needs. Next, she explained, comes the realization of female collectivity--what she called "the reaching out toward other women, first for mutual sup[port and then to improve our condition." Abel (1981) pointed out that "As the women's movement has constantly asserted, women cannot fight as individuals if they want to overcome the forces that oppress them as a group."

This concept of reliance on a support system may be especially difficult to inculcate in students because it runs counter to what faculty women themselves may accept. As Abel

explained in her study of female educators who had filed sex discrimination lawsuits, the educational system holds the promise of upward mobility based on merit, or personal achievement. If one buys into the notion that politics, rather than merit, explain success in academia then any past accomplishments may be devalued.[8] Another may hold primary loyalty to the university, rather than to the women's movement. Still another woman may consider collectivity unbecoming of a professional. Any one of these attitudes may explain why it becomes necessary to teach gender consciousness to help pave the way for later discussions of mentoring and networking, two important avenues toward helping break the glass ceiling for women in public relations. Promoting the notion of solidarity among women also should result in fewer "queen bees" among the next generation of practitioners.

Issues related to gender consciousness include economic and political penalties facing women, categorical or stereotypical treatment, influence, questions about the legitimacy of gender disparities and learning how gender shapes lives and language. Communication patterns are especially important to study early on in the semester. They lead to "groundrules" for class discussion, including issues of interruption, devaluation, favoritism, vocabulary and so forth. (Groundrules developed by Schmitz and adopted by the summer seminar at Maryland may be appropriate for public relations classes as well. A modified version is included as an appendix to this paper.)

3. Structures

[8] Higginbotham and Cannon (1988, p. 10) concluded from an exhaustive review of related studies that white male achievement is more closely tied to ability and that attainment for women and minorities is affected less by their abilities and more by their gender, race and class background.

The broader introductory topic of gender consciousness leads naturally to an investigation of the structural conditions that obstruct strong gender consciousness and ideological change among women. Educators might begin to think about their own status within the structure of the academy by reading the Women's Studies International Forum special issue on "Women in Academe" (Dudovitz, 1983). Key articles touch on empowerment, black women teaching in white universities, feminist strategies, comparing men's and women's careers in academia and a status report on affirmative action. Undergraduates might be assigned to read corresponding texts that speak to their situation. For example, in "Part I: The Academy" in the new text Women in Mass Communication: Challenging Gender Values (Creedon, 1989) they would learn more about gender values, feminist perspectives on media history and media law and gender in a global and multi-racial context. Two chapters are devoted entirely to women and education.

The related topic of sexual harassment in academia is important, too, for those of us interested in transforming not only the curriculum but the campus climate. I would like students to react to the arguments in Hoffman's (1986) controversial "Sexual Harassment in Academia: Feminist Theory and Institutional Practice."

Structural barriers in the workplace, rather than the classroom, have been aptly described in Cline's (1989) "Public Relations: The $1 Million Penalty for Being a Woman."

4. Management and leadership roles

By looking next beyond structural considerations in the workplace, we would move toward the more content-specific nature of the course. As a way of encouraging women and minorities--in particular--to aspire to this critical societal role, we could examine the literature of management from business, sociological, historical, psychological and economic

perspectives. We would, of course, discuss the currently trendy "Mommy Track" argument.

Perhaps more useful would be a look at gender-based roles in organizations, androgynous management style and what happens when women increase in significant numbers in fields previously dominated by men. As we move into this area of women and leadership, key concepts would include (1) the *yin-yang* of masculine vs. feminine characteristics, stereotypes, myths, psychological types and leadership styles; (2) empowerment (power, self-concept, assertiveness and equity); (3) support systems (mentoring, networking, support groups and so forth), and (4) balancing (using resources, stress, coping, decision-making and problem-solving). The relevant literature here, of course, is nearly limitless.

Conclusions

All of the above is predicated on the assumption that--as in the summer program for faculty at Maryland--the course will remain flexible. As Butler (1985, p. 82) put it, "Real transformation. . .requires a willingness to revise even while teaching, a willingness to be surprised." Such transformation carries with it the greater challenges of any quality program. The dean of undergraduate studies at the University of Maryland predicted that one effect of the transformation project would be a more rigorous curriculum (Mohrman, 1989). What is being modified in the preceding section, though, is more a **perspective** than a **curriculum**, or even a course. Truly transforming the public relations theory course would require new knowledge.

However, by accepting the challenge to look beyond the confines of the extant literature of public relations, we can anticipate finding a broadly based, interdisciplinary body of knowledge with both theoretical and practical application to this professional field.

This paper has argued for a two-pronged approach to transforming the curriculum in public relations--through both this interdisciplinary perspective and the creation of new knowledge about its history, in particular.

The effects of such a transformation should extend well beyond the classroom. While helping create an inclusive community of scholars in public relations at the time, it also should establish a future generation of managers who will reject any asymmetrical model of practice that does not value the diversity, the cooperation, the equity, the ethics and the responsibility that have characterized their education.

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APPENDIX

Groundrules* for Discussion in the Public Relations Theory Course

1. We acknowledge that we bring all behaviors to this class--conditioned by our gender, race, class, life experience, age and ethnicity--that will affect our interactions. We will take responsibility for monitoring ourselves and each other and pointing out these behaviors, especially if they negatively affect our ability to learn in the class.

2. We will not blame one another for behaviors and attitudes that are the result of cultural myths, stereotypes or misinformation. We accept our individual responsibility not to repeat myths, stereotypes and misinformation once we have learned otherwise.

3. We all will work to create a climate of trust and openness.

4. We will assume that people in the class are always doing the best they can.

5. We will make every effort to keep focussed on the topic of public relations theory and attempt to make project applications of what we learn to the practice of the field.

6. The use of time and format of the class will be flexible.

7. The professor will be the facilitator of the class and periodically seek input about its direction and effectiveness from students.

* Adapted from the draft guidelines of the University of Maryland at College Park Curriculum Transformation Project, Summer 1989.